

MDOT MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible
Transportation (CACAT)

The following meeting and tour occurred on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, commencing at 12:35 p.m. at the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration Metro Operations, 5801 Wabash Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215

Liam Davis	Chair, CAC
Tarah Ranke	CAC Member
Edward Cohen	CACAT Member
Ella Scovens	CACAT Member
Beth Wiseman	CACAT Member
Cynthia Dorsey	CACAT Member
Logan Mitchell	CACAT Member
Ally Amerson	CAC Member
Jed Weeks	CAC Member
Susan Sperry	CAC Member
Marlene Hendler	CACAT Member
Diedre Ferron	CAC Member
Roderick Jenifer	CAC Member
"Fremont" Bernard Sturtevant	CAC Member
Denise Hagans	MDOT MTA CACAT Facilitator
Aaron Campbell	MDOT MTA CACAT Co-Facilitator
Joan Ward	RCI Meeting Support

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. BaltimoreLink Update
Kevin Quinn, Administrator, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
- III. Tour – MTA Metro Operations Facility
Keith Jenkins, Acting Director, Metro Operations
Roberto Romero, Assistant Superintendent, Metro Railcar Maintenance

PROCEEDINGS

CAC and CACAT members met at the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) St. Paul Street site and traveled by bus to the Metro Operations facility. A pre-tour briefing was provided to update them on BaltimoreLink. The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m.

BaltimoreLink Update

Kevin Quinn, MDOT MTA Administrator provided a PowerPoint presentation to update the group on BaltimoreLink. He said he and his staff held a competition to replace the 5000 bus stop signs before the Launch. They planned to have different geographical teams spend 12 hours to complete the task, but they got it done in 7 hours. They actually received a report at 3:10 a.m. that the signs were in place, just before the first BaltimoreLink bus rolled out at 3:11 a.m.

However, he noted “You’re never going to get them all the first time.” So, they started doing Ride-Alongs the following week, with operators in SUVs, to review where adjustments needed to be made on the signage at the stop locations. They have driven all the routes, sometimes twice, to identify old blue signs that were missed, to double-check that the new signage made sense, and to identify and resolve any safety issues. They identified 100 action items from this review and ordered and installed new signs as soon as possible - making quick modifications to the system. They also observed lines that needed more service, like CityLink Orange and Blue lines, and worked to have supplemental lines added and to make them a permanent part of the fall school schedule.

Quinn outlined the huge amount of preparation that went into the launch of BaltimoreLink. They developed a Start-Up Plan and performed extensive outreach, including dozens of on-site briefings and tabletop exercises with stakeholders. They had teams riding all the routes to notify riders and answer questions to prepare for the changes. To prepare for the fall schedule, they have focused on a lot of school outreach in the past year and briefed student government associations throughout the City. At the start of BaltimoreLink in June, they conducted robo-calls and provided email and text message blasts to notify stakeholders of the bus route changes. They will do the same thing in the next few weeks to prepare for the fall schedule. They have also developed and distributed a *What You Need to Know* rider guide for students.

For some amazing backstory, Mr. Quinn said, “He was made the Acting Director two weeks before the launch of BaltimoreLink. In the next 2 weeks, there was a traumatic shoot-out in Dundalk involving one of their operators, an International Rail Conference, involving the light-rail lines, and a high-speed chase, involving two cop cars bursting into flames and knocking down electrical lines at one of the stations.” He said, “You could not make this up”, as he praised his staff and the operators for their professionalism in dealing with these challenges.”

They held a Kick-Off event with the Governor, the President of the City Council and the Mayor of Baltimore in attendance. He highlighted the pep rallies they held, with balloons and refreshments, to support the operators as they launched. He also held regular conference calls to troubleshoot, while conducting changeovers of the website and call-center menu, during this period.

The first full day of BaltimoreLink was on Father’s Day, with an Orioles game and a Pride parade downtown. There was an immediate diversion needed, as well as a significant spike in

bus bunching from numerous construction projects.. On Monday, the first full business day for BaltimoreLink, the website went down for an hour or two. Even after testing, the hardware crashed. The following day, on Tuesday, he got a call from the Chief of Police that there had been an explosion, and a 30 ft. hole in the ground led to several more diversions.

During Pre-Launch and Post-Launch, 300 MTA staff flooded the system and had face-to-face contact with 90,000 people. On the first day of BaltimoreLink, they received 18,000 calls. In the first 2 weeks, they received 112,000 calls, with wait times of 8-9 minutes. From a performance standpoint, there is already some good data, indicating a 6-7% jump in performance. They also surveyed operators on the roll-out week and found 73% of the operators said it went "OK, Good, or Great" and that they felt prepared for the changes.

Ella Scovens said, "She saw Mr. Quinn on T.V. and commended him for all his efforts and staying in contact with City Hall on the changes to the system." However, she noted that there is uneven service, with one line having numerous runs in one direction, and not enough runs going in the other direction, to Mondawmin. She also asked that Senior Center location bus stops be put back into the system and thanked him for listening. He said although they tried to be very careful, some 5-6 senior center stops were missed and will be added back into the system.

Tarah Ranke asked, "What were the most surprising or noteworthy issues learned from the town halls"? Mr. Quinn said, "The buses not taking correct right turns, with 5 or 6 operators calling in to report these and other routing issues in the first week." She asked how many operators there are and advised that she has been interviewing people and asked who she should tell people to call, when they have issues? He advised that there are 1250 total operators. The main MTA contact center would usually be the first point-of-contact, but since issues will be routed to James Lewis, the Customer Service Manager, that would be the best direct line to resolve issues.

Edward Cohen asked further questions on how ridership has been impacted, whether numbers have been normalized (actual on-time) and whether CAC will be provided data. Quinn said, "data is collected at the end of each month. Of course, with the free rides for the first two weeks, ridership increased in June." He expected that the July data will be comparable. He said, "The numbers have been normalized, or controlled." However, MDOT MTA's main goal with BaltimoreLink is to improve the on-time product, so they are investigating what data points are the most representative, and data will be provided to the CAC.

There was further discussion about operators that are consistently running stop signs at the Remington and 27th Streets intersection. Quinn agreed that operators need to be notified that a rule prohibiting this changed 3 years ago and it is not permitted. Beth Wiseman asked where to direct people that are asking about real-time traffic information. Quinn said, "MDOT MTA does post on social media and the website." However, they are preparing a Post-Launch report and he will review the best way to get the word out on real-time changes.

Finally, Logan Mitchell asked why meetings or updates to service changes are not included in MDOT MTA email notifications, for example to provide updates on the single-track issue. A lot of people are complaining about the time it is taking and think the contractor did a bad job, so MDOT MTA had to come in and redo the work. However, Acting Director of Metro Operations Keith Jenkins said, "The contractor did an excellent job and the issue has more to do with the budget and the ability to get the interlockings work done, when we only have 2 tracks." He is trying to balance the needs of the riders and the safety issues that are required to be

addressed. He was asked to communicate more with riders and other stakeholders, so people know what to expect.

MTA Facilitator Denise Hagans thanked everyone and said, "If they had additional questions, to write them down for follow-up and discussion at the next meeting." Quinn thanked everyone and said, "Your feedback is critical and I appreciate your advocacy to make a great transit system."

Metro Operations Tour

Metro Operations Assistant Superintendent Roberto Romero then distributed brochures to the group for their reference, and led the Tour. He noted that this facility is the location for all routine maintenance inspections, daily cleaning operations, vehicle repairs, and execution of all heavy repair requirements.

Romero showed the members the wheel press, where they press (condemned) wheels onto the axes of trains using up to 90 tons of pressure. He highlighted the car wash and all the tools and materials available for repairs/maintenance in the machine shop. He described the electronics located under the trains and pointed out the motor, generators. There was discussion about how the operators notify other trains that they are on the track and how that functions. He said, "They 'take it very seriously.'" Finally, he noted a reduction in the number of functioning trains on the 15-mile track, but affirmed that new trains would be added if the line was expanded to White Marsh. He discussed operations and the types of calls that they receive each day. CAC members were able to take photos and all questions were thoroughly answered.

The tour ended at 2:08 p.m.

The next meeting, for the CAC/CACAT (Annual Joint Meeting) is on September 21st, will be held at the MDOT MTA Office at 6 Saint Paul Street, 5th floor Conference Room from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.